



*Tibby*

SWAFFHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

together with the

REPORT

of the

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

1956.

S T A F F.

Medical Officer of Health: Robert N.C. McCurdy, M.B.Ch.B., D.P.H.

Public Health Inspector : John Miles, M.Inst.H.L., C.R.S.I.

COMMITTEES concerned with matters of PUBLIC HEALTH.

Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Housing Committee.

Housing Investigation Committee.

Roads and Sanitary Committee.

Water Supplies and Sewerage Committee.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area in acres . . . . .	7,592
Population (estimated at mid-year by Registrar-General)	3,070
Number of Inhabited Houses. . . . .	1,150
Rateable Value. . . . .	£34,270.
Product of 1d. Rate . . . . .	£137



Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1956.

There were, during 1956, several favourable trends in the health of the District. The Birthrate increased again to 18.9 per thousand of the population, and remains well above the national rate of 15.7. For the second year running, no stillbirths were registered, for the third year there were no deaths from tuberculosis and there was only one accidental death compared with 4 in the previous year.

On the other hand, the Deathrate increased again to 15.3 per thousand of the population, and remains well above the national rate of 11.7, and two infants died under one year of age, the first for three years. There was a rise in the number of deaths from pneumonia and bronchitis, the latter disease is often caused by smoking. An increase in deaths from cancer was entirely due to an increase in lung cancer. This disease killed four men, the youngest at 50 and the oldest at 67. There is so much which needs to be said about lung cancer that it will be the subject of a separate report in due course.

The number of cases of infectious diseases notified was very low for the second year running, but it included two fresh cases of tuberculosis, there were none in 1955. Tuberculosis in adults is often aggravated by smoking.

#### MEDICAL STATISTICS.

BIRTHS.	Male	Female	TOTAL
Live Births . . . . .	38	20	58
Stillbirths . . . . .	0	0	0

#### POPULATION AT MID-YEAR, BIRTHS, BIRTHRATE, STILLBIRTHS, STILLBIRTH RATES, DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Population . . . . .	3,006	3,012	3,030	3,040	3,070
Births (Total) . . . . .	36	45	36	53	58
Birthrate per 1,000 of population . . . . .	11.9	14.9	11.9	17.4	18.9
Stillbirths . . . . .	0	1	2	0	0
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 of population . . . . .	0	0.33	0.67	0	0
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 total births . . . . .	0	21.7	52.6	0	0

DEATHS.	Male	Female	TOTAL
All ages . . . . .	23	24	47
Infants under 1 year. . . . .	2	0	2



CAUSES OF DEATH OF INFANTS UNDER 1 YEAR.

	Male	Female	TOTAL
Birth injury . . . . .	1	0	1
Congenital abnormality . .	1	0	1

POPULATION AT MID-YEAR, DEATHS, DEATHRATE, INFANT DEATHS AND INFANT MORTALITY RATE, DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Population . . . . .	3,006	3,012	3,030	3,040	3,070
Deaths . . . . .	37	36	36	41	47
Deathrate per 1,000 of population . . . . .	12.3	11.9	11.9	13.5	15.3
Infant Deaths . . . . .	2	2	0	0	2
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births . .	55.6	44.4	0	0	34.5

DEATHS FROM CERTAIN SELECTED CAUSES DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

Cause	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Tuberculosis . . . . .	1	1	0	0	0
Bronchitis and Pneumonia . .	4	2	3	2	6
Other notifiable infectious diseases . . . . .	0	1	0	0	0
Motor vehicle & other accidents	1	2	0	4	1
Pregnancy, childbirth & abortion	0	0	0	0	0
Cancer of lung and bronchus.	0	0	1	1	4
Cancer, all other sites . .	2	5	6	8	6

DEATHS ACCORDING TO AGES (compiled from returns submitted by the District Registrar).

Age Group	Male	Female	Total.
Under 1 year . . . . .	2	0	2
1 and under 5 . . . . .	0	0	0
5 " " 10 . . . . .	1	0	1
10 " " 20 . . . . .	0	0	0
20 " " 30 . . . . .	0	0	0
30 " " 40 . . . . .	1	0	1
Carried forward . . . .	4	0	4



Age Group	Male	Female	Total.
Brought forward . . . . .	4	0	4
40 and under 50 . . . . .	1	0	1
50 " " 60 . . . . .	2	3	5
60 " " 70 . . . . .	6	3	9
70 " " 80 . . . . .	6	12	18
80 " " 90 . . . . .	4	2	6
90 and over . . . . .	1	3	4
Totals . . . . .	23 24	24 23	47

CAUSES OF DEATH AT AGES ABOVE 1 YEAR AND BELOW 50.

Age Group	Sex	Cause
5 to 10	Male	Heart disease
30 to 40	Male	Cerebral haemorrhage.
40 to 50	Male	Osteomyelitis of spine.

DEATHS FROM ALL CAUSES (Registrar-General's Short List).

List No.	Cause	Male	Female	Total
1	Tuberculosis, respiratory . . . . .	0	0	0
2	Tuberculosis, other . . . . .	0	0	0
3	Syphilitic disease . . . . .	0	0	0
4	Diphtheria . . . . .	0	0	0
5	Whooping Cough . . . . .	0	0	0
6	Meningococcal infections . . . . .	0	0	0
7	Acute Poliomyelitis . . . . .	0	0	0
8	Measles . . . . .	0	0	0
9	Other infective and parasitic diseases . . . . .	0	0	0
10	Malignant neoplasm, stomach . . .	1	1	2
11	Malignant neoplasm, lung bronchus	4	0	4
12	Malignant neoplasm, breast . . .	0	0	0
13	Malignant neoplasm, uterus . . .	0	1	1
14	Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms . . . .	1	2	3
	Carried forward . . . . .	6	4	10



List No.	Cause	Male	Female	Total
	Brought forward . . . . .	6	4	10
15	Leukaemia, aleukaemia . . . .	0	0	0
16	Diabetes . . . . . . .	0	0	0
17	Vascular lesions of nervous system . . . . .	3	6	9
18	Coronary disease, angina. . .	3	0	3
19	Hypertension with heart disease	0	0	0
20	Other heart disease . . . . .	3	3	6
21	Other circulatory disease . .	1	3	4
22	Influenza . . . . . . .	0	0	0
23	Pneumonia . . . . . . .	0	2	2
24	Bronchitis . . . . . . .	0	4	4
25	Other diseases of respiratory system . . . . .	0	0	0
26	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	0	0	0
27	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea . . . . .	1	0	1
28	Nephritis and nephrosis . . .	0	0	0
29	Hyperplasia of prostate . . .	1	0	1
30	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	0	0	0
31	Congenital malformations . .	2	0	2
32	Other defined and ill-defined diseases . . . . .	3	1	4
33	Motor vehicle accidents . . .	1	0	1
34	All other accidents . . . .	0	0	0
35	Suicide . . . . . . .	0	0	0
36	Homicide and operations of war	0	0	0
	All causes . . . . .	24	23	47



THE FOLLOWING TABLE COMPARES BIRTHRATES, DEATHRATES,  
ETC. OF THIS DISTRICT WITH THOSE OF ENGLAND AND WALES AND OF  
THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF NORFOLK IN 1956.

	England and Wales.	Norfolk	District
Birthrate . . . . .	15.7	15.3	18.9
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 total births . . .	23.0	21.5	0.0
Deathrate . . . . .	11.7	12.1	15.3
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births .	23.8	18.1	34.5
Tuberculosis deathrate per 1,000 population . .	0.11	0.06	0.0
Lung Cancer deathrate per 1,000 population . .	0.41	0.33	1.30

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Tuberculosis, all sites . . . .	1	1	1	0	2
Scarlet Fever . . . . .	12	5	4	1	4
Whooping Cough . . . . .	1	64	8	2	2
Measles . . . . .	54	49	11	1	3
Poliomyelitis . . . . .	1	0	0	1	0
Pneumonia . . . . .	1	3	2	2	4
Puerperal pyrexia . . . . .	0	0	0	1	0
Infectious jaundice . . . . .	2	2	5	0	0
Food Poisoning . . . . .	0	0	0	2	0

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED IN 1956 BY AGES

Disease	Under 1 yr.	1-5	5-10	10-15	15-25	25-45	45-65	Over 65	Total
Tuberculosis . . . .	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
Scarlet Fever . . .	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	4
Whooping Cough . . .	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
Measles . . . . .	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	3
Pneumonia . . . . .	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	4



INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED IN 1956 BY MONTH OF NOTIFICATION.

Diseases	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jly	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Tuberculosis ..	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Scarlet Fever.	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	4
Whooping Cough	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
Measles . . .	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3
Pneumonia . .	2	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4

THE FOLLOWING TABLE SHOWS THE NUMBER OF CASES ON THE  
TUBERCULOSIS REGISTER AT 31ST. DECEMBER, 1956, COMPARED  
WITH 31ST.DECEMBER, 1955.

	Respiratory			Non-Respiratory			Grand Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
31.12.55.	4	1	5	0	0	0	5
31.12.56.	6	0	6	0	0	0	6

I should like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council and my colleagues on the staff, for their continued support and help during the year.

I have the honour to be,  
Your obedient Servant,

ROBERT N.C. McCURDY.

Medical Officer of Health.



SWAFFHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR YEAR 1956.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting to you my third Annual Report which will be quite unsensational but nevertheless indicative of a progressive trend in most aspects of public health work. This has been the keynote of our work for many years, and I hope that an objective study of the report will confirm that this policy is bringing about a significantly higher standard in the several services dealt with.

HOUSING.

Financial considerations were responsible for a marked decrease in the volume of housing work as the following figures all too clearly show:-

No. of houses built by the Council ...	14
do. by Private Enterprise..	4
	18

This compares very unfavourably with the previous year, when a total of 87 houses was achieved, but in a district so predominantly dependant on agriculture for its wages, the Council could never justify building at interest rates which would demand such high rents. It is to be hoped that this is a passing phase in the country's economy and that in a relatively short space of time, Swaffham can again undertake a worthwhile building programme on land already ripe for development.

SLUM CLEARANCE.

I referred in my last report to the policy of linking slum clearance with the building programme, and despite the falling off in the number of houses built, progress in slum clearance was made with the result that 26 sub-standard houses were demolished during the year.

It is to be hoped that whenever possible, the Council will continue to give priority to persons wishing to move from the remaining scheduled houses into Council houses, but I would still advocate the policy of leaving the initiative in this question where old people are concerned, always providing that the house in which they are living is not seriously detrimental to their wellbeing.

Slum clearance is not a static problem, and a further 6 houses were made the subject of closing orders during 1956. All these houses were occupied at the time of inspection and the orders will be carried through as and when these tenants are re-housed.

HOUSE REFUSE & NIGHT SOIL.

Perhaps the best criterion of good administration in this service is the way the public take such matters for granted. The work has been carried out well, and the complete absence of complaint or publicity is the only proof necessary of this claim.

At the risk of being thought boringly repetitive, I would again stress the close tie between slum clearance and this matter. Standards of public health and housing must continually advance, and happily we can claim this to be the case in Swaffham. I shall, therefore, stress in any report which I bring on the subject of housing inspections the high priority which I give to the abolition of the pail closet system. I shall also treat as seriously detrimental, the necessity for any householder to bring house refuse bins through the house for collection and disposal.



## CARAVANS.

Locally, this subject does not assume the proportions it does in many districts, and we are fortunate in that the only licensed site in the district is well maintained and conducted. The site is provided with good sanitary accommodation and ample water supplies.

A different aspect of this problem arises from time to time in the Council's area when dealing with travelling people who tire temporarily of travelling and stop by the roadside. So far I have not had to trouble the Council on this score, as persuasion usually serves to make their stay a short one, but recently a firmer stand had to be taken with such a site when public health standards were threatened.

## SCAVENGING.

All street gullies on both main and district roads are now emptied at quarterly intervals by modern plant operated through Contractors. The once familiar heaps awaiting collection at the side of each gully is now a thing of the past.

As suggested in my last report, attention has been given to raising the standard of scavenging in the side streets. The intention is to ensure that every street in the built-up area is swept twice each week, but this aim cannot be achieved immediately. This year, a relatively large increase has been made in the total length of streets which are cleansed weekly as in effect the whole residential area is now thus covered.

## SEWERAGE & SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The sewerage area was further increased during the year by extensions of sewers in Tumbler Hill, New Sporle Road and Castleacre Road. This policy has everything to recommend it from the points of view of both the Council and developers, as in all the cases quoted above, facilities were provided which obviated the use of cesspools, which usually serve such outlying areas, and the opportunity given to property owners to convert pail closets to water closets.

The scheme to enlarge the irrigation area at the Sewage Disposal Works was carried through up to the point of piping the sedimentation tank effluents to the new section. Work remained to be done on such minor details as did not affect the principle of the scheme, but by November, the flooded portion of the old works had been drained and a start made in drying off the carriers which had not been useable for many years.

The full value of this small scheme cannot be assessed at present, although it is quite certain that had this work not been carried out when it was, an extremely serious situation would have arisen during the early months of 1957, as the water level over a very large area of the existing works stood well above road level and was only contained by soil banks.

The full implications of this scheme will be reviewed in my next report which I can only anticipate to the extent of stating that the main theory underlying the plan has been fully vindicated, but that a relatively large area of the land purchased for this purpose cannot be utilised by gravitational means and is to that extent redundant.

## WATER SUPPLY.

The same policy was followed as with other services for new development district, and water mains were extended for this purpose to Tumbler Hill, Castleacre Road and Manor Way. In addition, a new 3" main was laid to outlying farm premises at the request of the occupier. With this new extension, very little of the Urban area is now without a piped water supply.



The difficulties referred to in my last report with regard to the electrically operated pumps continued to cause anxiety during the first part of the year, but ultimately, the usual spirit of compromise brought about a satisfactory solution to this problem and for the remainder of the year under review, no stoppages occurred.

The total quantity of water pumped during the year amounted to a little over 31 million gallons. Three samples of water were taken during the year and the Laboratory report was, in each instance, excellent.

#### FACTORIES & WORKSHOPS.

Once again I am pleased to report that in the limited sphere of this important work, little difficulty is met with as personal contact is kept with every factory owner in this area. We have good relations with H.M. Inspector of Factories, and when dealing with the section of the Act relating to fire precautions, we have had the benefit of advice from the County Fire Officer's Department on the requirements of each individual case.

In this manner, the need to issue notices has been completely obviated and a good standard of maintenance sustained.

#### FOOD INSPECTION.

On the 1st. January, 1956, the Food Hygiene Regulations came into force, and every business concerned received a copy of the explanatory memorandum.

This is, relatively speaking, one of the most important fields of public health activity in Swaffham, and the number of inspections involved is sufficient proof of this fact. The new Code referred to is, in general, a good one, in that it has been clearly drafted in such a way that everyone connected with food handling should fully understand what is expected of them, and it cannot be too often stressed that it is the human element with which we are primarily concerned. The premises of food shops can be brought up to the required standards, but this can be offset completely by the employee who ignores the notice to "wash your hands." For this reason, improvements are essentially progressive and visits and inspections frequent. Happily, there have been no difficulties in persuading the owners of the premises to carry out the necessary alterations to conform with the Regulations, and I have remarked a noticeable awareness on the part of employees in this trade of the important part they must play in the raising of the standards of hygiene.

Before leaving this subject, I must make plain the fact that there is one aspect of the problem which leaves room for improvement, and here I refer to the catering trade. Finger prints which need no microscope are still found on allegedly clean plates, and cups all too frequently bear the smears of previous users. There can be no excuse for these abuses of public trust with so many excellent modern detergents on the market, and I hope that any member of the public will not hesitate to complain in the proper quarter whenever he is presented with off-white china.

The table given below has been amended to include school canteens and hotels, since these premises now come within the scope of the Hygiene Regulations:-

Butchers' shops .....	5
Grocers' & Greengrocers..	13
Cafes, restaurants,	
canteens etc .....	11
Bakers & Confectioners ..	5
Fishmongers and fryers ..	2
Milk, Ice-cream etc .....	12



MEAT INSPECTION.

Each of my reports has shown an increase in the number of cattle passing through the Swaffham slaughterhouses until now it has assumed the proportions of four times the figures when I first took office in 1954. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this point is to take the basis laid down by the Ministry for Exchequer Grants. On this basis, Swaffham is responsible for meat inspection for a town of approximately 48,000 population. I need not say that this service is a heavy strain, for I am confident that this is well known to the Council already. This work demands a regular timetable for a good proportion of every day from Monday to Friday inclusive, and from this point of view, it is a serious tie.

These remarks are, of course, personal, and I must refer to the more important aspect of the question, namely, the nuisance experienced by any resident in the districts surrounding the three slaughterhouses. Here again, the Council are familiar with the complaints relating to noise (a matter over which we have no jurisdiction), stench, and the particular problem of the nuisance due to the emptying of the blood-pit. Obviously these are justifiable causes for complaint, even though every endeavour has been made to reduce the trouble to a minimum. I have no immediate suggestions to make on any of these matters, but I would refer to the legislation now before Parliament and express a personal opinion to the effect that two of the three existing slaughterhouses in Swaffham can never be made to conform to the standards laid down in the Bill. If I am correct in this opinion, there will even then be the largest slaughterhouse remaining, and this in a built-up section of the town. Perhaps if this state of affairs does come about, we can bring even more attention to bear on what would then be a focus of controversy and find some palliative for the complaint.

Fairness demands that in concluding this part of my report, I must again say that I have consistently enjoyed the full co-operation of the trade, which is itself of the highest quality in my experience. My views on the dressing of casualty carcases and emergency slaughtering are well known to those concerned, and it is extremely rare for anything but prime cattle to pass through the Swaffham slaughterhouses. This mutual understanding makes what would be an impossible task, a workable proposition.

Carcases Inspected and Condemned.

Item	Description.	Cattle	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Total
1	Number killed	4,555	244	2,360	7,259	14,418
2	Number inspected	4,555	244	2,331	7,222	14,352
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis:</u>						
3	whole carcases condemned	2	-	1	4	7
4	carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	1,731	11	262	815	2,819
5	percentage of the number inspected affected with a disease other than Tuberculosis ignoring broken legs or tissues defective from fighting, fences etc.	38	4	11	11	20

contd



Item	Description.	Cattle	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs	Total
5	Tuberculosis only:- whole carcases condemned	11	-	-	8	19
7	carcases of which some part or organ was condemned (taking into account that the offal, head and tongue etc., may be parts of one animal).	344	-	-	90	434
8	percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis.	8	-	-	1	3
9	average number of animals slaughtered per week	87	5	45	140	277
10	percentage examined by the Meat Inspector.	100	100	99	99	99

#### RODENT CONTROL.

My report of last year could equally apply to the present year, and I will, therefore, limit myself to saying that the work is well done whenever reports are received and passed on to the Council's expert operator.

#### SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

Item	Description	Inspections	Notices served	Nuisances abated or pending.
1	Factories and Workshops	13	1	1
2	Bakehouses, Foodshops, Market and Abattoir	566	1	1
3	Housing Defects (Housing Act, 1936).	45	5	1 fumigation 5
4	Middens, Ashpits and Bins (Public Health Act, 1936).	8	-	-
5	Infectious diseases	3	-	3 fumigations
6	Food Poisoning	2	-	-
7	Rodent Control (Pests Act, '49).	6	-	-
8	Tents, Vans, Sheds etc.	9	1	1
9	Water Supply	3	-	-
10	Drains, Cesspools, Vaults, Pail & Water Closets and Drainage of Premises.	47	-	-
11	Ice Cream and Milk	12	-	-
TOTAL		714	8	11

NOTE: Council Houses (374) are not included in above.

I have the honour to be,  
Your obedient Servant,

JOHN MILES.  
- 5 - Public Health Inspector.

